

An impartial observer or an impassioned advocate?

Issues and challenges in language policy research in Timor-Leste

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In this paper, I describe my experience of undertaking linguistic research in Timor-Leste. I set the context by briefly describing the language situation and the tensions between global and local languages in this multilingual polity. I discuss my experience of negotiating with language planning agents. In so doing, I highlight the challenge of maintaining an ethical and objective stance in a situation where language politics are highly politicised and culturally sensitive.